

sunlight OR expose it to florescent lighting without the protection of an ultraviolet shield.

- Choose an interior wall if you can. Objects placed on outside walls are more vulnerable to external changes in temperature and humidity and to the condensation that often forms in cold weather.
- Keep your treasures away from water. DO NOT put them in, near, or under a bathroom.
- Keep them away from windows. Left near windows, your treasures are targets for rain, humidity, pollutants, and condensation.
- Rotate your display—frame a number of your treasures alike, display some and store the others carefully, preferably flat in an interior closet. DO NOT stand them on end nor store them in an attic or basement. Rotation is good for your treasures. The attention you give them increases their significance.

#### Oversize Objects

*Your oversize items need special care. They are heavy, gravity strains the paper fibers, and they will tear and sag with prolonged display.*

- When you exhibit an oversize treasure, support it carefully, don't "string it up."
- If you must have it on permanent display, angle it at no more than 25 degrees from a flat surface.

#### Summary

1. Show you treasure to a conservator; get some advice.
2. Copy your FRAGILE treasure for display; DON'T hang the original.
3. Avoid dry mounts, tape, and acidic glue;

use acid-free, alkaline, or Japanese paper and a neutral, water activated paste.

4. Mat and back your display with white or cream museum board.
5. Frame your display with metal or sealed wood.
6. Don't let glass touch your documents, photographs, or works of art.
7. Place your exhibit with care.
8. Rotate your displays every few months to "rest" the materials.

*If you need advice, call the conservation laboratory at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History—803/734-8579 or 803/734-8577. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM*

#### Vendors of archival supplies:

Light Impressions (photographic needs, mat board)  
439 Monroe Ave  
Rochester, NY 14607  
To order call 1-800-828-6216

Conservation Resources (storage boxes, photographic needs)  
8000-H Forbes Place  
Springfield, VA 22151  
703-321-7330

Archivart (mat board and backing)  
301 Veterans Boulevard  
Rutherford, NJ 07070  
201-935-2900 or 1-800-631-0193

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## SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

### Document Conservation Leaflet

# 2

#### The art of archival framing



## The art of archival framing: how to display and preserve your paper treasures

*Are you guilty of "loving not wisely but too well" when you frame your prized photographs, prints, and documents for display?*

*Are your pen-and-ink drawings and your maps doing a slow burn because they come in contact with framer's mats, gray pressed board, or corrugated cardboard?*

*Has a wood knot appeared on your deed signed by John C. Calhoun because wooden boards have backed its frame for fifty years?*

*Have those photographs you matted so handsomely or slid so carefully into plastic frames wrinkled, faded, or grown mold in a few short years?*

*If so, here are some tips to help you avoid these little tragedies.*

### The Object

- Oversize or embrittled materials and faded photographs are unlikely candidates for display—copy your original, frame the copy, then preserve your original in archival enclosures. You will find more tips on oversize materials at the end of this brochure.
- Water colors, pastels, and unfaded photographs will endure only if you hang them for short periods—use them as part of a rotating display.
- Your documents will need treatment—let a conservator deacidify them before they are framed.

### Mounting

- Do not dry mount any valuable photograph, art work, or document. The process is almost irreversible.
- Hinge your document at the top with

acid-free, alkaline, or Japanese handmade paper.

- Add support corners at the bottom using inert polyester, acid neutral, or alkaline paper. Support corners made from any of these materials are readily available, or you can make them yourself.
- Use only wheat paste, methyl cellulose, or ethulose in the framing process. DO NOT use rubber cement, Elmer's glue, or even pressure sensitive tapes that are labeled "archival." ALL pressure sensitive tapes are acidic.

### Matting

- Mat your treasures ONLY on 100 percent museum board. And keep those with special value away from colored mats—the dyes are acidic.
- If you want some color, place a buffer board of white or cream between your treasure and the dyed mat. And use this buffer even when you "float" your document on top of the mat.

### Backing

- Beware of "chip boards," cardboard, and wood. These are highly acidic and will mount an attack from behind.
- Beware of foam core backing. Its paper lining is usually acidic and the core emits harmful gas as it deteriorates.
- Beware of brown Kraft paper.
- Back your documents with museum board, archival-quality corrugated board, Japanese paper, a binder's paper such as Bodleian repair, any other acid-free, buffered tissue, or polyester paper that is chemically stable and strong.

### Glass

- DON'T let the glass touch your documents, photographs, or works of art. If it does, your treasure will become damp when the humidity rises. Photographs will stick to glass when their gelatin emulsion is damp. Damp paper will attract mold.
- DO place enough matting between the glass and your treasure to prevent contact.
- DO NOT use double glass. If you cover your treasure with glass front and back, you will expose it to intensified fluctuations in temperature and humidity.
- If your treasure will be exposed to natural or florescent light: DO cover it with plexiglass UF-3 to filter out the ultraviolet rays.
- DO NOT use plexiglass with media that will flake—your charcoal or pastel sketches, your chipped paint or ink, or your water colors. Static electricity created by the plastic in the glass will pull the media off its paper support.

### Framing

- A metal frame is the frame of choice. Don't scratch it, and keep it away from water.
- DO NOT use a metal frame if you live in extreme humidity. The humidity will oxidize the metal.
- Wooden frames are rich in lignin, a natural acid. Before you use one, seal it with a polyurethane NOT made with formaldehyde.

### Placement

*Now that you know how to frame your treasure, where will you put it? Your choice is critical. One wrong move, and the protection you've gained from your meticulous framing is lost.*

- DO NOT place your treasure in direct